

December 17, 1962

U.S. News & World Report

VOLUME LIII—No. 25 WASHINGTON, D.C.

AFTER CUBA: WHO STOOD FOR WHAT

In the hue and cry over fateful decisions during the Cuban crisis—

Top officials are called "soft," or hesitant. Others are praised. Are changes on the way?

President Kennedy will decide. But evidence is clear that all is not serene in the White House.

There is much more than meets the eye in the furor over who stood for what during those critical days in October when the U. S. and Russia were on the brink of nuclear war over Cuba.

This furor has followed publication of an article in the December 8 issue of the "Saturday Evening Post." The article was written by two personal friends of President John F. Kennedy—Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett. Mr. Bartlett is frequently in the company of the President.

A picture of those days of crisis was drawn in terms of the personalities involved.

Of Adlai Stevenson, U. S. Representative to the United Nations, the article said: "'Adlai wanted a Munich,' says a non-admiring official who learned of his proposal. 'He wanted to trade the Turkish, Italian and British missile bases for the Cuban bases.'"

This charge has been vigorously denied by Mr. Stevenson. And President Kennedy, on December 5, expressed his "fullest confidence" in the Ambassador.

Of Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, the magazine article said: "Secretary Rusk's position does not come through loud and clear. . . ."

Job changes ahead? Out of those comments by two close friends of the President came conjecture that changes might be forthcoming in the U. S. delegation to the United Nations and in the Department of State.

This conjecture, too, was officially denied. In a letter to Mr. Stevenson, President Kennedy said: "Your continued work at the United Nations will be of inestimable value." Mr. Rusk, also, is said by high Administration sources to be secure in his job—for the time being.

However, Mr. Bartlett's name on the magazine article suggested to many that he was being used as an instrument of the Administration's personnel policy.

Mr. Bartlett was the first to write that Chester Bowles would be replaced as Under Secretary of State, and demoted

(continued on next page)



New York "Times" Photo
ADLAI STEVENSON found himself a center of controversy over his White House role in the Cuban crisis. President Kennedy praised U.N. Ambassador Stevenson.

ATTER CUBA: WHO STOOD FOR WHAT

In the hue and cry over fateful decisions during the Cuban crisis—

Top officials are called "soft," or hesitant. Others are praised. Are changes on the way?

President Kennedy will decide. But evidence is clear that all is not serene in the White House.

There is much more than meets the eye in the furor over who stood for what during those critical days in October when the U. S. and Russia were on the brink of nuclear war over Cuba.

This furor has followed publication of an article in the December 8 issue of the "Saturday Evening Post." The article was written by two personal friends of President John F. Kennedy—Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett. Mr. Bartlett is frequently in the company of the President.

A picture of those days of crisis was drawn in terms of the personalities involved.

Of Adlai Stevenson, U. S. Representative to the United Nations, the article said: "'Adlai wanted a Munich,' says a non-admiring official who learned of his proposal. 'He wanted to trade the Turkish, Italian and British missile bases for the Cuban bases.'

This charge has been vigorously denied by Mr. Stevenson. And President Kennedy, on December 5, expressed his "fullest confidence" in the Ambassador.

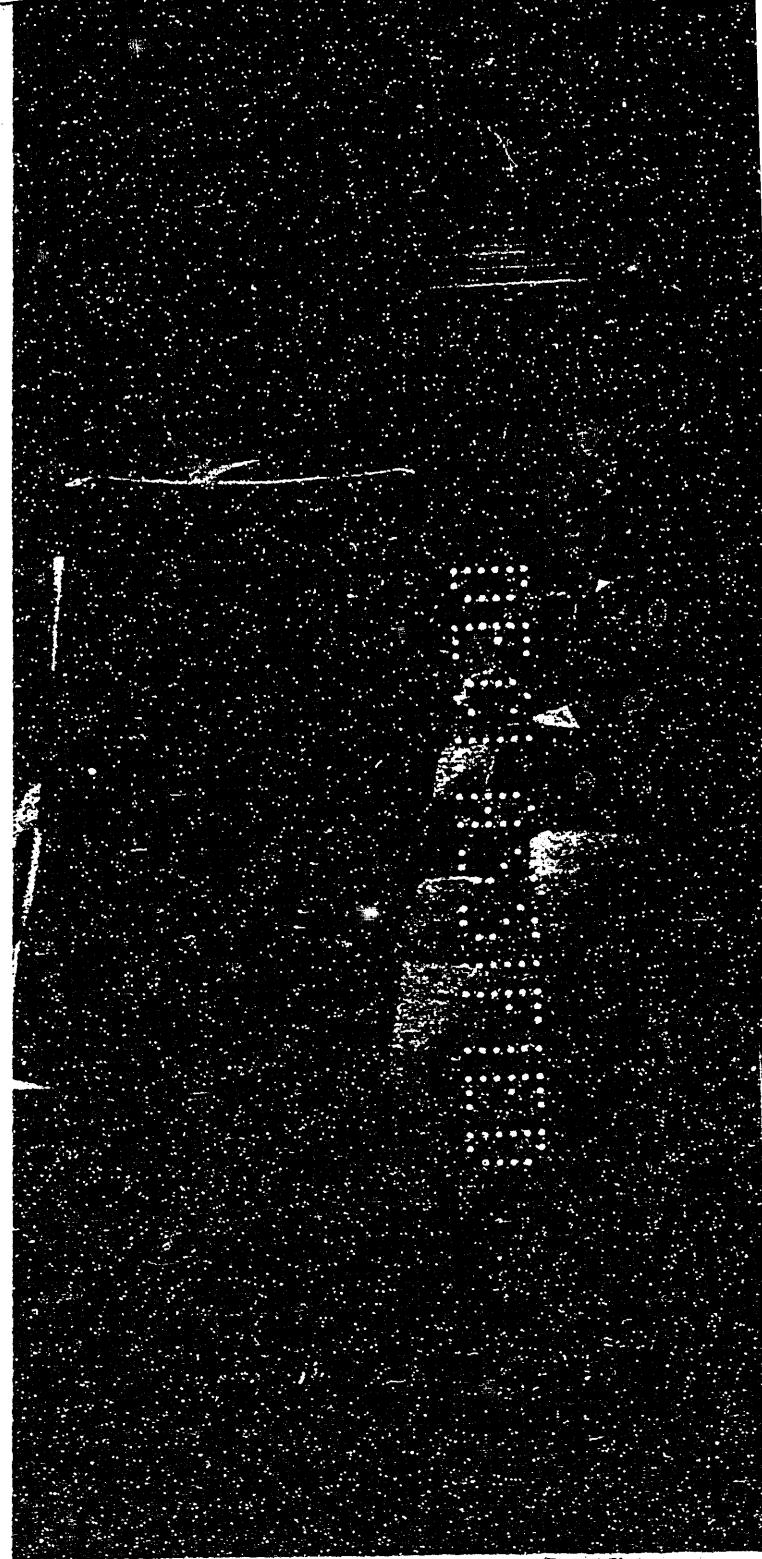
Of Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, the magazine article said: "Secretary Rusk's position does not come through loud and clear. . . ."

Job changes ahead? Out of those comments by two close friends of the President came conjecture that changes might be forthcoming in the U. S. delegation to the United Nations and in the Department of State.

This conjecture, too, was officially denied. In a letter to Mr. Stevenson, President Kennedy said: "Your continued work at the United Nations will be of inestimable value." Mr. Rusk, also, is said by high Administration sources to be secure in his job—for the time being.

However, Mr. Bartlett's name on the magazine article suggested to many that he was being used as an instrument of the Administration's personnel policy.

Mr. Bartlett was the first to write that Chester Bowles would be replaced as Under Secretary of State, and demoted
(continued on next page)



New York "Times" Photo

ADLAI STEVENSON found himself a center of controversy over his White House role in the Cuban crisis. President Kennedy praised U.N. Ambassador, urged him to stay on job.

U. S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, Dec. 17, 1962

33

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MB

D. H. Kuhn Jr.

DATE *3/2/88*

REVIEWED by *D. H. Kuhn Jr.* RELEASE DECLASSIFY
 EXCISE DECLASSIFY in PART
 DENY Non-responsive info.

FOI, EO or PA exemptions _____

TS authority to:

CLASSIFY as _____, OADB
 DOWNGRADE TS to (S), (G), OADR

87-

DOS 02130

PB



Photo: U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, Jacques Lowe

McGEORGE BUNDY, left, one of President's top aides in White House, achieved new importance in Cuban crisis. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara proposed limited-blockade plan that was adopted.



ROBERT KENNEDY was at the President's elbow, playing a key role.



JOHN McCONE, intelligence chief, was early supporter of "hard line."

[continued from preceding page]

to an advisory job as roving ambassador. That was in July, 1961, and Mr. Bartlett's story was answered by official denials from the White House.

In November, 1961, the Bowles shift took place, exactly as Mr. Bartlett had predicted four months earlier.

It could be, some Washington observers now believe, that time is running out for Mr. Stevenson and Secretary Rusk as top Government officials.

How leaders lined up. Some official reputations were enhanced by the Alsop-Bartlett account of six days of crisis between October 16 and October 22.

Favoring direct action, if needed—bombing and/or invasion—were said to be: Gen. Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and all the Joint Chiefs; John McCone, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Douglas Dillon, Secretary of the Treasury; Dean Acheson, former Secretary of State, and McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President on national-security affairs.

Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, is pictured as author of the policy of blockade and warning that was accepted by Mr. Kennedy. Mr. McNamara, in fact, is seen as having gained most in stature and reputation from his performance—and that of the defense establishment—during the crisis over Cuba.

Yet, this whole incident, a look at the facts shows, does not start or end with the October decisions.

A fateful decision. The story of crisis in Cuba really started 18 months earlier. On April 16, 1961, a Sunday night, Presi-

dent Kennedy made his fateful decision to deny American air cover to an American-trained invasion force scheduled to land the next morning, April 17, on Cuban beaches in the Bay of Pigs.

Top military officials have been convinced all along that had the presidential decision been different, Fidel Castro's regime would have been destroyed in the weeks that followed, thereby ending the Castro problem.

Adlai Stevenson, whether rightly or wrongly, was represented as influencing the President in his decision not to fulfill a promise of air cover for this invasion. Mr. Stevenson said later—he was not consulted on the matter of air cover.

An opportunity was lost, many feel, and as a result Castro remained to plague the U.S.

Then came the second Cuban crisis. Raúl Castro, Fidel's brother, in the summer of 1962 had been in Moscow conferring with Russia's Khrushchev.

The first warning. On August 23, the Central Intelligence Agency gave its first warning to national-security officials that something dangerous seemed to be up in Cuba. All through September the urgency of these warnings was stepped up. There was a warning of large missiles being sent to Cuba.

These warnings were based upon "hard" intelligence reports. But their significance, some Congressmen and others have charged, was underestimated in the White House. The American public repeatedly was told that weapons being emplaced by Russian troops in Cuba were "defensive" weapons only.

Military and intelligence officials were alarmed by this unwillingness to accept

their findings. Diplomats and so-called "experts on Russia" in the Department of State insisted, instead, that since Khrushchev had never permitted emplacement of offensive missiles outside the borders of Russia—not even in Eastern Europe—the American intelligence services could only be wrong.

As a result, the buildup for a vast "Pearl Harbor"—with more than 40 U.S. cities placed under the threat of instant and total destruction—was allowed in Cuba while the White House accepted the State Department's assessment that no danger existed.

Defenses flanked. At this point, the entire defenses of the U.S. had been flanked, and the balance of world power appeared to manouver about to be tilted in Russia's favor.

Not until actual pictures could be taken of Russian missiles in place, manned by Russian soldiers and zeroed in on U.S. cities over a range of 1,000 miles, did the White House react firmly to what its Central Intelligence Agency had been trying to tell it.

Military officials recall that at Pearl Harbor it was a misreading of intelligence that brought disaster. In Cuba, these same sources say, it was reluctance by the White House to believe its own intelligence that opened the way to what could have been a stupendous disaster involving the lives of possibly 25 million Americans.

The inside story now being told on the basis of information fed out from high sources concerns only what happened once a camera actually had taken pictures of Russian missiles in place. The story of why little reliance was placed



GEN. MAXWELL TAYLOR, head of Joint Chiefs, favored direct action.



DEAN ACHESON, elder statesman, argued for invasion—if necessary.



DEAN RUSK, Secretary of State, is said to be secure in job although his position on Cuba was not "loud and clear."

any intelligence other than a photograph is not being told.

There is this further fact: Even the photographing of Cuba by U-2 planes was held up during a critical period, not alone by weather, but by White House concern after a U-2 plane had strayed over Sakhalin Island, off the Pacific Coast of the Soviet Union, on August 30. The White House restricted U-2 flights after Khrushchev called the flights "provocative."

Overnight: a change. All changed quickly on October 16. That was the day the White House received pictures—taken on October 14—showing Soviet missiles in firing position in Cuba. It was a dramatic turnaround.

There was no thought of turning to the United Nations to deal with this threat to the security of the United States. Allies were not asked what the U. S. should do to defend itself. Officials who had been urging a "hard line" in dealing with the Communist threat—after being on the sidelines—suddenly returned to favor. President Kennedy, with the threat on his doorstep, decided for action.

Military officials tended to favor an strike to wipe out the possibility of a missile attack without question.

The Alsop-Bartlett article said that Robert Kennedy, the President's brother and Attorney General, led the argument against a strike of this kind on the ground that it would be "a Pearl Harbor in reverse and contrary to all American traditions."

Dean Acheson was pictured as leading the argument on the other side, holding that the President repeatedly had warned that the U. S. would not permit a buildup of offensive weapons in Cuba.

It was in this period that Adlai Stevenson was represented as favoring talk over action.

Defense Secretary McNamara came up with the formula finally adopted—that of limited blockade as a first step, with a warning of U. S. readiness to act if the missiles were not withdrawn.

What record shows. The crisis over Cuba, on the basis of the record, made a number of things clear.

President Kennedy, for one thing, acted for the U. S. alone—not in concert with allies or through the United Nations.

When the issue of Cuba came up at the United Nations later, a presidential aide wrote much of the strong speech delivered by Mr. Stevenson. Also, when the time came to negotiate with the Russians, the President called in John J. McCloy, an advocate of the "hard line," to work alongside Ambassador Stevenson.

Robert Kennedy, in this second Cuban crisis as in the first, was at the President's elbow, playing a key role.

It became clear in this period, as well, that McGeorge Bundy, the President's special aide for national security—already highly important—has grown in importance. He often speaks for the President in the field of foreign policy.

All of this led up to the question: Will Adlai Stevenson now step out as U. S. Representative to the United Nations?

On that point, one knowledgeable official said: "If I were Stevenson, I would walk out. It was obvious that high Administration officials had done a professional knifing job. Mr. Stevenson, however, is not basically the type of person who is quick to make a decision of that kind."

Official Washington continued to buzz

over the full implications of the Alsop-Bartlett article.

One of those who participated in the small-circle deliberations on Cuba put it this way:

"It is downright lousy when you can't talk to your President in the White House without someone who was there spreading your views all over the country." This man is one of those who favored a tough line on Cuba. Like most other key officials, he does not deny that the published account of what went on in the White House is essentially correct, but he is critical of those who fed out the information.

A point is made that the President and his top subordinates were aware that the Alsop-Bartlett article was in preparation. The White House says that the President did not receive either of the authors in connection with their article. However, Mr. Bartlett did spend a weekend with the President in Virginia during the period when the story was being written.

Also, one or both of the authors had interviews with Robert Kennedy and McGeorge Bundy, among others at the top of the Administration.

Mr. Rusk's role. Just where Secretary of State Rusk stood in this turbulent affair was less than clear. It appears to some observers, however, that high-level Administration snipers may have him in their sights, as well as Mr. Stevenson.

Mr. Rusk, in the lull that followed publication of the article, did nothing to clarify his situation for the public. The Secretary is fond of quoting advice given to him by the late Gen. George C. Marshall to the effect that high Washington officials must follow a "no cronies" policy while in office. Unlike the President, Mr. Rusk shuns friendships among Washington newsmen.

As the days passed, however, Mr. Rusk's position looked far more solid than Mr. Stevenson's.

It became clearer, nonetheless, that both the President and his ranking advisers have sharply downgraded the Department of State and the way it operates. This attitude was reflected in the Alsop-Bartlett article's almost total ignoring of the State Department in retracing the events of the Cuban crisis.

Blow to White House. What happens to Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Rusk, veteran observers in Washington say, the Kennedy Administration has been hurt in one important way.

The cover of secrecy has been ripped from what should be its most secret policy deliberations. Highest officials of the Government faced the prospect that any out-of-step opinion—at the most confidential level—could result in public exposure. It had happened once. It could happen again.